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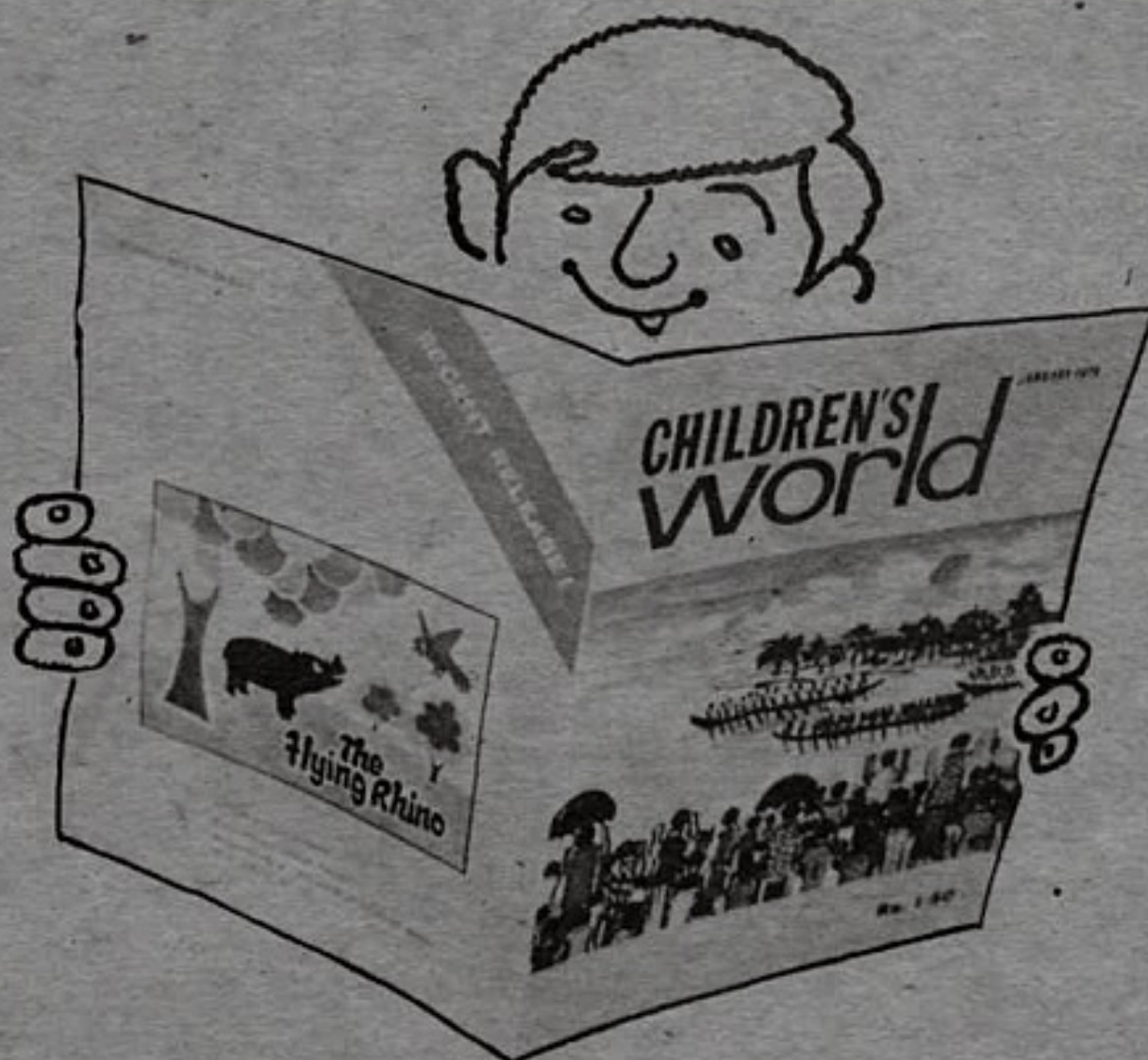
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CHANDAMAMA

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No. 9

Founder : CHAKRAPANI

POWER DOES NOT NECESSARILY CORRUPT !

" Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely," wrote Sir J.E.E. Dalberg (the first Baron Acton). This is often quoted by political commentators of our time.

But read the part of *Veer Hanuman* appearing in this issue of your magazine. Bharata ruled Ayodhya for fourteen years. But far from growing any attachment to his power, he was just eager to surrender it to Rama.

To rule a land is a great responsibility, not a pleasure. A ruler with a true sense of service will naturally feel happy to pass on his power to one who can serve better!

And look at the greatness of Rama. He sent Hanuman in advance to Bharata with the instruction to observe Bharata's reaction to the news of his home-coming. Had Bharata shown the slightest sign of sadness at having to lose his own authority, Rama would have perhaps gone away elsewhere, allowing him to rule Ayodhya.

Such noble are the examples before us. Hence we need not take it for granted that power must corrupt one. It all depends on the level of one's consciousness. We can always try to keep the level high.



GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

आरोप्यते शिला शैले यत्नेन महता यथा ।

निपात्यते क्षणेनाधस्तयात्मा गुणदोषयोः ॥

Āropyate śilā śaile yatnena mahatā yathā

Nipātyate kṣaṇenādhastathātmā guṇadoṣayoḥ

It requires a great effort to lift a boulder up the hill; but it can come down so easily. Similarly, it requires effort to uplift our spirit. To stoop is easy.

— *The Hitopades*

आशाया ये दासास्ते दासाः सर्वलोकस्य ।

आशा येषां दासी तेषां दासायते लोकः ॥

Āśāyā ye dāsāste dāsāḥ sarvalokasya

Āśā yeṣāṃ dāsī teṣāṃ dāsāyate lokah

Those who are slaves of desires are slaves of the whole world. But those who have made desires their slaves, are masters of the whole world.

— *Subhasitaratnabhandagaram*

ईर्ष्यो घृणी त्वसन्तुष्टः क्रोधनो नित्यशङ्कितः ।

परभाग्योपजीवी च षडेते दुःखभागिनः ॥

Irṣī ghrṇī tvasantusṭhaḥ krodhano nityaśaṅkitaḥ

Parabhāgyopajībī ca ṣaḍete duḥkhabhāginaḥ

Those give to envy, hatred, discontentment, wrath and suspicion; and those who live as parasites on others' fortunes, are the six types of people who are miserable.

— *The Hitopadeshah*

THE MIGHTY AND THE DWARF

Bali the demon grandson of Prahlad, was a great hero. He conquered the whole earth for himself and became the mightiest king ever known. But his ambition was not satisfied even then.



He invaded heaven. Gods could hardly match him in power and valour. They must either leave heaven or live as Bali's subjects.



The awe-struck gods gathered before Vishnu and told him all about their plight. Vishnu knew that although Bali was proud of his power, he was truthful and kind. He could not be vanquished like any ordinary demon.



Vishnu was born as the son of the sage Kashyapa and his wife Aditi. As he grew up he was observed to be a dwarf – Vamana. However, he studied the scriptures and became known as a wise Brahmin. He was called Vamana.

King Bali performed a great *Yajna* with hundreds of Brahmins chanting *mantras*. The king announced on that occasion that he will grant whatever anybody asked of him.



It was evening. All the guests had been satisfied. Then Vamana approached the king. "Welcome, O Brahmin. Ask me for anything and it will be given to you," said Bali. "Promise it with the sacred water in hand", demanded Bali.

Shukracharya, the guru of Bali, realised that the dwarf Brahmin was none other than Vishnu Himself. He dragged Bali aside and asked him to refuse to oblige the Brahmin.



But Bali had already promised to fulfil the Brahmin's desire. Shukracharya decided to stop the sacred water from coming out of the jug so that Bali's promise is not solemnised. He changed himself into a fly and entered the spout of the jug.

At Vamana's suggestion Bali, in order to clear the passage, pushed a sharp blade of grass into the spout. The grass pierced an eye of the fly. Shukracharya came out and assumed his own form—but he had lost an eye.





As the sacred water flowed down, Vamana wished to have space enough for keeping his feet. Bali granted it. Instantly, Vamana began growing in size. He covered the entire earth with one foot and heaven with the other.

To the amazed Bali, Vamana said that he still needed space for a third foot of his, which emerged from his navel. Bali showed his head. Vamana kept his third foot on his head and pressed him down to the nether world. Thus was the proud king humbled by a dwarf.



Now, Bali's wife Vindhya-
vali, prayed to Vamana to
pardon her husband.
Vamana promised that in
future, in an age yet to
come, Bali will be the king
of heaven. His truthful-
ness will be rewarded.

THE COSTLY APPLE!

It was evening. The Caliph, Harun-al-Raschid and his Wazir, Zaafar, were strolling along the narrow lanes of the city of Bagdad. Needless to say, they were in disguise. Nobody recognised them. Nobody cared to talk to them.

But they talked to people and learnt about their sorrows and joys.

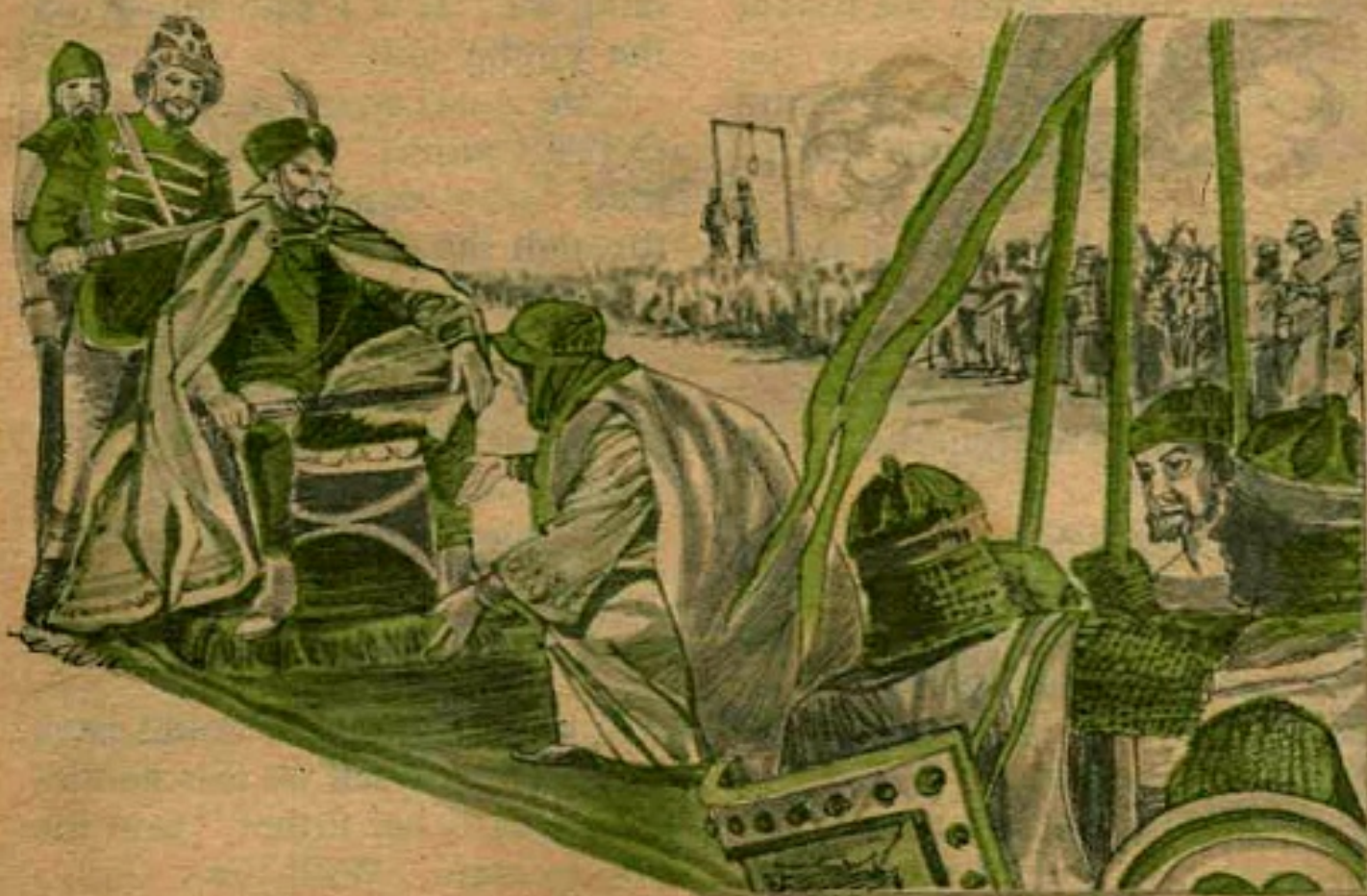
"O God, O God!" sighed an

old man and cursed his own fate, as they passed by him.

"What ails you?" queried the Caliph.

"I am a fisherman. I have spent the whole day casting my net into the river, but without being able to catch a single fish," said the man with a sigh.

The Caliph was moved to pity. "Come with me to the riverside. Cast your net just



once more. Whatever comes ashore when you drag the net shall be bought over by me for a hundred gold mohurs," assured the Caliph.

The old man gladly accompanied the two to the river again. As the Caliph and the Wazir looked on, he cast his net. When he dragged it ashore, it was found to have brought with it a wooden casket.

The Caliph rewarded the fisherman with a hundred mohurs and, with the help of the Wazir, carried the casket to the palace.

But his surprise and sorrow knew no bound when the casket was opened. Inside it lay the dead body of a charming young lady. She had been stabbed to death.

"My Wazir! You must catch the murderer at the earliest. Failing, you lose your head!" said the Caliph, overwhelmed with sorrow and trembling with rage.

The Wazir was granted three days to find out the culprit. And, we may be sure that he and his hundred assistants did their best. But the culprit could not be traced.

On the fourth day the Caliph ordered for the Wazir to be

hanged. The people of the city heard the Caliph's decision with deep sorrow, for they new the Wazir to be a just and good man.

The citizens came by the hundreds to witness the hanging. The Wazir's kinsmen were wailing loudly. The Wazir stood with a solemn face. The Caliph was extremely unhappy to punish his good Wazir, but he wanted to set an example for the future Wazirs.

Suddenly a young man dashed at the Caliph and kneeling down before him, said, "O just ruler! Spare the innocent Wazir and hang me. It is I who murdered the young lady."

"He is not speaking the truth, O just Caliph!" shouted an old man who came out pushing through the crowd. "It is I who killed the young lady!"

The Caliph, the Wazir and all the people were perplexed.

"Speak the truth—who between you is the murderer—or I will hang both!" growled the Caliph.

"If you will be pleased to hear why she was killed, you will understand who could have killed her, myself or this gentleman who is her father," said the young man. With the Caliph's

permission he then narrated his story:

He was a merchant. He considered himself lucky in his wife who was at once beautiful and faithful.

Once the young lady fell sick. When no medicine did her any good, she expressed her desire to taste an apple. Her husband, thinking that to satisfy her desire would do her good, set out in search of apples.

He visited every fruit-shop in the city and every orchard.

But no apple was available. He learnt that in that season there was only one orchard, the Caliph's, away in the city of Bassora, where apples grew.

The young merchant rode to Bassora. It took him four weeks to return with three fruits which he had bought paying three gold coins.

His wife was delighted to receive the apples. However, instead of eating them, she kept them beside herself and continued to be delighted looking



at them and playing with them. She began to recover.

The merchant, absent from his shop for a long time, now gave more attention to his business in order to make good the lapse.

One evening while closing his shop, he was surprised to see a fellow who looked a ruffian passing by holding an apple in his hand. The merchant asked him how he got the apple.

The fellow's eyes brightened up. He whispered to him, "I have a mistress in this town, a very rich man's wife. Her husband brought three apples for her from the Caliph's garden in the far away city of Bassora. She passed on one to me!"

The ruffian then ran away with merry strides.

The merchant felt that his blood had begun boiling! He marched home and saw that beside his wife lay two apples instead of three.

"Where is the third apple?" he demanded.

"It is missing since some time," said the lady.

The merchant felt sure that what the ruffian said was true. Nobody had access into his wife's bedroom. The ruffian could not have got the apple

unless she had given it to him.

At the height of passion, he killed her. He then put her dead body in a casket and went out of the room.

He saw his little son standing in a corner of the house. Afraid that the child might have seen what he did, the merchant asked him, "Why are you looking so gloomy?"

"I do not know how to face my mother," said the boy sadly. "She did not allow me to touch those apples saying that you had brought them with great pains and so she would like to dry them and keep them with her for ever. I stole an apple this afternoon only to play with it. As I was hurling it up and was catching it, standing in the meadow, a passer-by came rushing and took hold of it. I told him how it had been brought by my father from Bassora for my mother who was sick and requested him to return it. But he escaped with it."

The merchant now realised the blunder he had made. He felt like smashing himself. Soon his father-in-law arrived there. The merchant told him everything. Both of them wept bitterly and carried the casket to the river and immersed it in

the water.

The Caliph heard the story with rapt attention. His anger was now shifted to the ruffian. He ordered his Wazir to find out the fellow.

Another three days passed. Again the Wazir failed to trace the culprit. On the fourth day the Caliph ordered that the Wazir be hanged.

The Wazir bade goodbye to his family. When she embraced his little daughter, he felt an apple hidden in her clothes.

At his asking the girl showed him the apple and said that she had just bought it from their household slave, paying him a coin. The slave was questioned. He confessed to his pinching it from the merchant's son.

The Wazir dragged the fel-

low to the Caliph who was happy that the culprit had been caught. He handed over the slave to the hangman and offered to reward the Wazir.

"My lord! Let the slave be spared of his life. He can be paraded through the country to let the people know how an idle lie can cause a great tragedy!" appealed the Wazir.

"But let the people know the whole truth. The tragedy was caused by this fellow's lie on one hand and my passion and hasty action on the other hand. I too should be paraded with this fellow," proposed the weeping merchant.





THE KING'S COUSIN

Long ago the kingdom of Banga was ruled by Pradipsen, a king who was as wise as he was humble. He patronised scholars and such people who showed some talent in some field or the other. Moreover he was kind and he listened to the complaints of his subjects with great patience. He offended none.

One morning while the king was preparing to come down to the durbar from his apartment in the upper floor, he heard some noisy exchange near his gate. He came out to his balcony and observed what was going on below. An old man in tattered clothes was trying to convince the gate-keepers that he was a cousin of the

king.

"But we know all the kinsmen of the king. You cannot deceive us," said the gate-keepers. A number of noble-men who were entering the palace to attend the court laughed at the old man's claim. But the old man persisted in his claim.

"You fellows won't know me. But the king would, I am sure," he said repeatedly.

The king could easily understand that the old man was a learned pundit. The man suddenly saw him and asked, "O King, am I not the son of your mother's sister?"

"You are, indeed. Please come in!" replied the king.

The gate-keepers and the noblemen stood stunned. With a smile of victory the old man went in.

The king welcomed him in the court and asked, "How are you, my cousin?"

"My mansion is in a dilapidated condition. The light that burnt within is now burning brighter, but the shadow it casts is quite gloomy. All of my thirtytwo servants have deserted me, one after another. Two assistants were enough beforehand, but now I have employed a third one. The two friends who were near have gone far; two who were far have come

nearer," stated the old man.

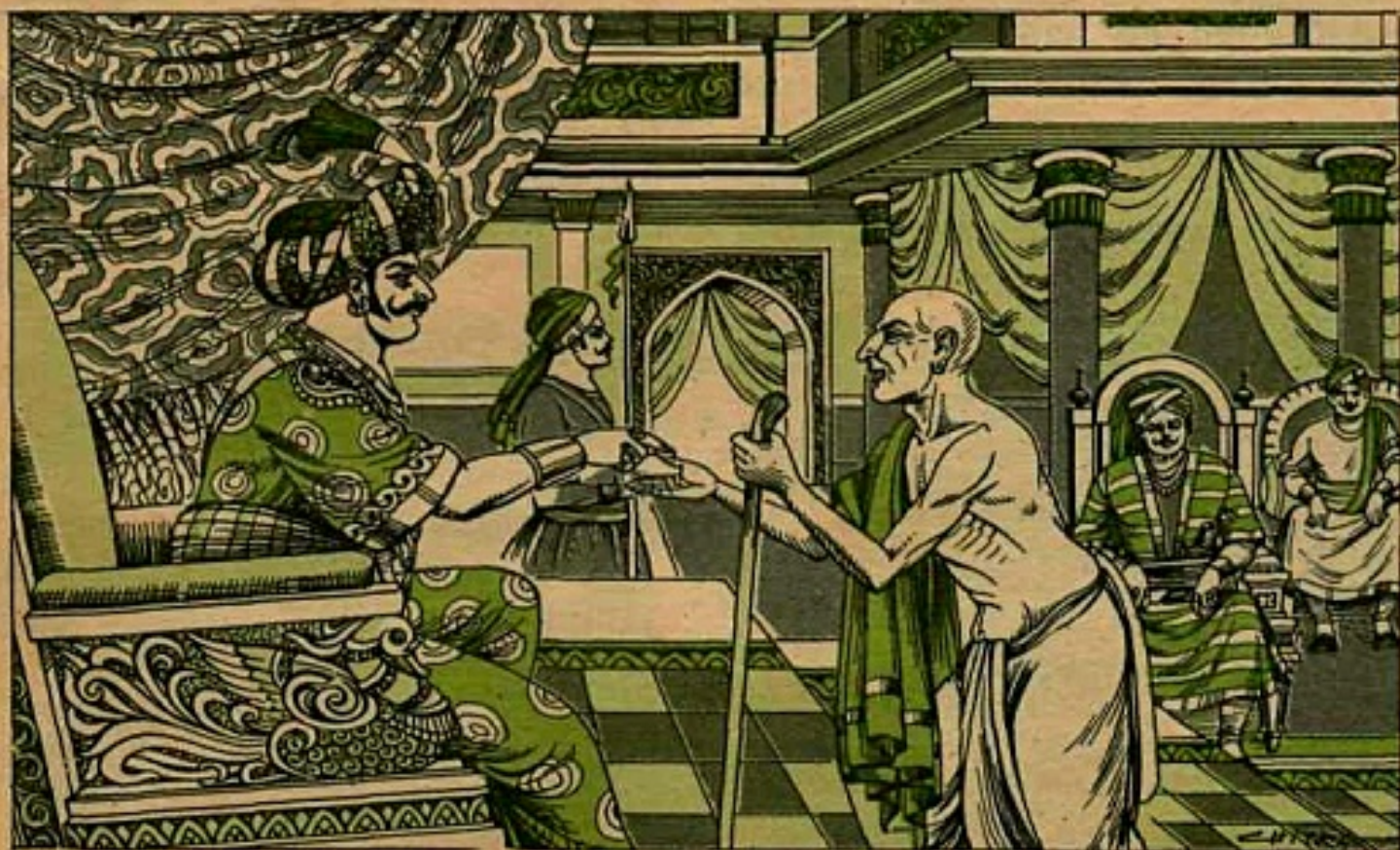
"I see. Now, tell me, what can I do for you?" asked the king affectionately.

"Well, I heard that you are soon going out on an expedition to Ceylon. If you allow me to lead your party, you can proceed without the help of a ship!" replied the old man.

The king laughed and gave ten thousand rupees to the old man and said, "Better I take away your power to dry up the sea!"

The old man too laughed and expressing his gratitude to the king, left the court.

The courtiers looked amazed.



After a while, one of them ventured to say, "My lord, we never knew that you had such a cousin. It has been difficult for us to follow what transpired between you and the visitor. Will you kindly explain?"

The king said, "The witty visitor claimed to be my cousin because, being a scholar, he considered himself a son of Goddess Saraswati. For my wealth, I was considered the son of Goddess Lakshmi. Saraswati and Lakshmi being popularly known as sisters, we were cousins!

"His mansion was his body which had grown old. By light he meant his enlightenment. Although he had grown more enlightened within with age, the same age cast a gloom on his external appearance. The thirtytwo servants were his teeth

which were all gone! The two assistants were his two legs and the third one he had to appoint newly was the walking-stick. Two friends who were near had gone far meant his ears could not record sound properly. One has to shout as if speaking from far to enable him to hear. The two friends who were far have come nearer means his eyes which could see objects at far can now see only things at close."

"What is meant by his capacity to dry up the sea?" asked an amused courtier.

"Does not a popular proverb say that if an unlucky fellow goes for water even to the sea, the sea would dry up? The moment I gave him the wealth, he was no more unlucky. He lost his capacity to dry up the sea!" explained the king.



KALHANA

—The First Historian

"Listen, O King, we are hungry. Will you please arrange to feed us immediately?" – a group of Brahmins told King Damodar, the kind and compassionate ruler of Kashmir who was crossing a meadow.

"I am going to take my bath in the river Vitasta. It is already late and the river is still far to reach. I will satisfy your hunger as soon as I return," said the king.

"But, O King, we are hungry.

It will be wise on your part to return to the palace, feed us first and then go for a bath," insisted the Brahmins.

As ill luck would have it, the king was then in no mood to obey the Brahmins. He ignored them and advanced towards the river.

"If you must bathe before giving us food, well then, here is the river. Take a plunge. Be quick!"

To his surprise, King Damo-



dar saw a flow of water passing before him. But, instead of feeling happy with the sight, he felt annoyed. Obviously, the Brahmins had created the illusion of a river where there was none.

"Such miracles do not impress me," he said. "If you are so hungry that you cannot wait a moment more, you should have used your magic power to create a few delicious dishes for yourselves. Since you cannot do that, wait till I return, or *sarpata*!"

Now, *sarpata* meant "Be

gone!" The angry Brahmins retorted, uttering a curse, "Turn into a *sarpa*!"

Sarpa meant serpent. The king at once turned into a snake.

In the olden days people of Kashmir believed the king to be still living as a serpent. Often they would look at a hissing serpent passing through a meadow and imagine it to be King Damodar still trying to reach the river Vitasta! Let us hope that the king is out of the curse by now.

This and several similar



stories are to be found in the *Rajatarangini*, by Kalhana. We should not, however, conclude that the *Rajatarangini* was a book of stories. It is a work of history, though legends galore have found place in it.

The *Rajatarangini*, in fact, is the first work of its kind in India. It is a record of the kings of Kashmir, from the earliest time to 12th century, composed in Sanskrit verse.

Kalhana was born perhaps in A.D. 1100 at Pratisthapur of Kashmir. His father, Champaka, was an officer in the Court

of King Harsha of Kashmir. When Harsha died, the kingdom experienced chaos. Battles were fought between different ambitious groups. Kalhana gives a vivid account of these events.

Kalhana had a purpose in writing the book. He showed the horrors wrought by battles and intrigues and stressed the fact that the evil never went unpunished.

Kalhana is looked upon as the first historian of India, although his narration covered only a part of India.



The Prince and the WIZARD

3

(It is the birthday of Princess Pratiba, the only child of King Bhuvansingh. Nobles are heaping their presents and scholars their praise on the princess. But bored with all that, the princess slips into the royal orchard. She is pursued by Samser, the queen's nephew, who intends to marry her. Suddenly the princess and her maids find themselves face to face with a tiger. Samser flees. But Badal and Ramu who were hiding in a tree come to the damsels' rescue.)

The tiger gave out a loud roar. Samser who was by then already near the rear gate of the orchard doubled his speed.

Badal had sent Ramu to inform the keeper of the royal zoo that the newly captured tiger had escaped into the orchard. Bare-handed he now stood between the beauties and the beast.

The tiger gave yet another roar and advanced a little. Badal too stepped forward. As the distance between him and the tiger was reduced, the princess and her maids looked panicky

"Princess, please do not tarry.

Go away immediately," said Badal in a commanding tone, without taking his eyes off the tiger.

The maids dragged the princess a few steps backward. But the princess freed herself from their hold and stopped. The maids understood that she felt it unbecoming of her to escape from the scene leaving the gallant young man alone with the ferocious beast.

Suddenly the tiger took a leap. Badal jumped forward at the right moment and caught hold of the springing tiger's forepaws. The tiger growled angrily and opened his fearful mouth. But before it could set its teeth on Badal, he gave it a forceful push. It tumbled down on its back and rolled on the ground.

But in no time it was ready to launch a fresh attack. As it stood upto its full size and swung its tail menacingly, one of the maids gave out a shriek.

"What! You have not yet left the place?" said Badal looking

back for a split second. The tiger was preparing to make another jump, with greater wrath and more careful aim. But, luckily for Badal, Ramu had just arrived with the zoo-keeper and his assistants. The zoo-keeper threw a noose around the tiger's neck. It closed tightly and the tiger was

brought under control.

Cautiously raising his head from the other side of the mound Samser ascertained that the tiger was well under check. He came out, with his sword raised, and announced, "Don't you fear, princess! I am here to protect you. This one is going to be the hundredth tiger to be



killed by me. In fact, I have killed far bigger tigers—of the size of elephants!”

“Now I understand why you ran away. Accustomed to kill elephant-size tigers, you found this one too small to be your prey. Besides, the small tiger was going to do no other harm than devouring the princess, eh?” commented Badal.

“That is right,” agreed Samser without understanding that Badal was being sarcastic.

But “Wha! Wha!!” laughed Ramu. The princess and her maids giggled. Now Samser felt deeply offended.

“Why, you think I am a coward, do you? Look here!” blurted out Samser as he followed, with his long sword lifted, the tiger that was being dragged away. But all he did was to aim his sword at the tiger’s tail, and that too from a safe distance.

Badal burst into a hearty laugh and said, “Well done, O brave fellow, well done. But why deprive the poor beast of its tail? Do you propose to use it for yourself? That should make an excellent decoration for you.”

Samser turned towards Badal furiously and goggled his reddish

eyes.

“Who are you? How dared you trespass into the royal orchard? I put you under arrest!” shouted Samser.

Badal only cast a look of contempt at him. He then courteously bowed to the princess and began walking in the direction of the gate.

“Close the gate!” Samser shrieked out the order to the gate-keepers. The tiger had by then been led into a movable cage and taken out of the gate. The gate-keepers instantly obeyed Samser’s order.

Badal headed at a tree and began to climb it. Samser looked undone. At that the princess tittered.

“You can’t escape!” Samser shouted again and dashed at the tree.

“Don’t think that I cannot climb the tree!” Samser said threateningly and climbed the tree with great difficulty.

The princess and her maids as well as Ramu enjoyed the fun. And, indeed, there was a feast waiting for their sight! Samser had reached the first branch when a naughty monkey came hopping towards him baring its teeth.

“Oof!”



Samser fell flat on the ground and blinked looking at the princess. The young ladies looked the other way, trying

their best to suppress their laugh.

"Get, up, sir, get up! Your delicate body, sir, is meant for the cradle!" It was Ramu who was helping Samser to stand up. "Come on, sir, I will carry you home—sweet home!" said Ramu and he supported Samser who walked limply.

Badal jumped from tree to tree with remarkable ease.

"There goes that naughty chap!" Ramu said pointing his finger at Badal who jumped from one tree to another, in the process advancing towards the road. Samser limped on quietly, grinding his teeth with fury.

"Now, my bonny boy, go and get coddled in a cradle, well?" Ramu advised Samser leaving him outside the orchard.

It was only then that Samser became conscious that the fellow who lent him a helping hand was one of the two trespassers.

"Halt!" he shouted.

"No, my boy, I will rather bolt!" replied Ramu and he bolted away and joined Badal who had in the meanwhile jumped down to the road.

(to be continued)





LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

The Touch of the True Devotee

Playing his veena and singing with joy, the sage Narada returned to heaven after one of his occasional wanderings upon the earth. The first thing he did was to go to Lord Vishnu and bow to Him.

Vishnu gazed at the sage and said, "How lucky you are!"

"Of course I am lucky, O Lord, for, I never cease from chanting your glory," responded Narada.

"What I mean is, you are lucky because you visit the earth again and again and thereby get the chance to come in touch with true devotees, good and great souls," explained Vishnu.

Narada brooded over this observation of Vishnu for a long time. Was it such a great

thing to come in touch with good and great souls? He wondered.

He could not contain his doubt for long. He asked Vishnu, when he met Him next, "O Lord, I understand that to come in contact with a good and great soul is a happy experience. But how can it be of so great importance that one should be considered lucky on that account? Will you please explain?"

"I suggest, O Narada, that forthwith you proceed to Dandakaranya. On the western part of the great forest stands an old banian tree. In a nest in one of its hollows, there is an infant bird. In fact, it has come out of its shell only an hour ago. The infant



bird should be able to give you the explanation you seek," said Vishnu.

Narada immediately left for Dandakaranya. Great was his curiosity. He did not rest until he found the banian tree. Indeed, in one of its hollows was a nest in which an infant bird was fluttering its tiny wings. It was yet to feel the sunlight or the breeze.

Narada put his hand affectionately on the bird. The bird looked at him. But before Narada had got a chance to put his question, the infant bird fell dead!

Narada felt extremely sad.

He buried the bird at the foot of the tree and returned to heaven.

"Why do you look so grave, my great devotee? It seems you have not yet received the answer to your question," observed Vishnu when Narada was back in His presence.

"O Lord, you know everything. The mission on which you sent me has only increased my curiosity, not satisfied it," said Narada.

"On the outskirts of the city of Ayodhya, on the bank of the river Sarayu, lives a poor gardener. His cow has just given birth to a calf. Go and put the question to that calf," was Vishnu's instruction this time.

Narada was gone at once. Before long he stood in front of the gardener's hut.

"Is it true that your cow has given birth to a calf?" he asked the gardener.

Delighted to see a sage, the gardener received him with great warmth and led him to the back-yard of his hut. There stood the new-born calf, being licked by its mother.

"O sage, be kind enough to bless my calf!" appealed the gardener.

Narada patted the beautiful

calf on its back. The calf fixed its eyes on Narada's face for a moment, but the very next moment fell on the ground. Narada shrank back with fear that the fate that had befallen the infant bird had now overtaken the calf too. His suspicion was correct. The gardener examined the calf with great anxiety and found it to be dead. He looked at the sage with bewildered eyes.

Quite nonplussed, Narada retreated hastily.

"O Lord, I did not expect you to cause me such embarrassment when all I wanted was to know the benefit of one's association with good and great souls," Narada told Vishnu, his voice betraying his wound.

"Have patience, my wise sage, it is far from my intention to cause you any embarrassment. In fact, I am hardly doing anything except helping you find the answer to your own question," said Vishnu with a smile of compassion. He then added, "A prince has been born to the King of the Chola dynasty. I am sure, if you meet the infant prince, you will be fully satisfied."

Narada was reluctant to take the trouble again. But said



Vishnu, "I have no doubt that you will do as I say, for, you have never done otherwise!"

Indeed, whether the result was humiliation or happiness, a true devotee of the Lord never hesitated to work according to the Lord's wish. Narada was again in his jolly spirit. He was seen entering the palace of the Cholas before long.

The king happened to know Narada. He and his court welcomed the sage with a great show of their respect for him.

"O sage, your visit is God-sent blessings to us. You have come to us on a day which is auspicious, for a son has been

born unto us. Your presence makes the day doubly auspicious. Be pleased to bless the infant prince," said the king.

Narada felt a little trepidation in his heart. 'I wish and pray the prince does not go the way the bird and the calf went!' he told himself. But his trust in the Lord helped him to gather courage.

"I will be happy to bless the prince, but on condition that I should be left alone with him," said Narada.

"As you wish, O great sage," said the king.

The queen and her maids vacated the room in which the bonny prince lay. The prince turned to look at the sage. A sweet smile played on his lips.

"You are supposed to answer a question of mine. What is the benefit of one's association

with good and great souls?" Narada asked the child.

"Great is the benefit, O sage, and I am a living example of the benefit myself," answered the prince.

"I do not understand you," confessed Narada.

"Born as a bird, for a moment I came in association with you, O good and great soul. My spirit got an upward push and I was born as a calf. Again it so happened that I came in your blessed contact, O good and great soul, Narada! My spirit got a push. I abandoned my bovine form and here I am—reincarnated as a human being, a prince! I bow to thee, O great Narada!" said the prince, beaming with joy.

Narada was enlightened. He blessed the prince and departed, singing the glory of Lord.





TWO FRIENDS

In years gone by lived a sage named Ajikarta. He had an Ashram in a forest. Young disciples lived with him in the Ashram and received their education from him.

Among Ajikarta's students were Jaydev and Rohit, two close friends. But the guru observed that their friendship had cracked. The calm and gentle Jaydev was avoiding Rohit—who was often given to fits of anger. Rohit spoke against Jaydev to everyone.

Ajikarta called Jaydev and asked him, "Why don't you mix with Rohit any more?"

"Sir, he is huffy and ill-tempered. I fear that if I remain in his contact I will imbibe

his temper," Jaydev replied humbly.

Ajikarta kept quiet for a moment. Then he narrated a story to his dear student:

In a village lived two young men, Ramesh and Sudhir. Though Ramesh was gentle by nature and Sudhir was haughty, both had become intimate friends. Together, they worked for the welfare of their village and the people knew them to be inseparable from each other.

But, suddenly they fell apart. Their love for each other grew into mistrust and even hatred. People were sad that an exemplary friendship should come to such an end.

One day a hermit visited the



village. He could predict fortune and tell the people what would bring them good luck or bad luck.

Ramesh met the hermit and learnt something about his own future. In course of the meeting the hermit told him, "There is a strange trait in you for which if you embrace somebody on the next full moon night he shall grow quite rich. But the person you choose to embrace should be a brave man."

The full moon night was not far away. Ramesh tried to decide who deserved to be embraced by him. In his know-

ledge there was only one truly brave man in the village—Sudhir. But Sudhir hated him. Ramesh had no business to make a fellow who hated him rich.

Sudhir too met the hermit. He was told that if he embraced anybody on the full moon night the man shall die!

The full moon night came. Sudhir was tempted to put an end to his erstwhile friend by embracing him. He strolled towards Ramesh's house with the sinister motive.

Ramesh did not wish the chance of making someone rich slip by. He too walked towards Sudhir's house though he was not yet sure if he should embrace his erstwhile friend.

Midway they met. At once Ramesh got over his hesitation and went closer to Sudhir. For Sudhir it was a grand opportunity to embrace Ramesh, thereby bringing about his death.

But as they came closer, Sudhir hesitated. But Ramesh embraced him.

"Leave me, or you die!" shrieked Sudhir. But it had been too late. He too had embraced Ramesh.

"Why did you embrace me?"



Sudhir asked with agitation. "By embracing me, you obliged me to embrace you. This will result in your death!"

"I embraced you to make you rich!" said Ramesh.

Both ran to the mendicant who laughed and said, "Ramesh you have made Sudhir rich by conquering his hatred. So far as you are concerned, you shall not die!"

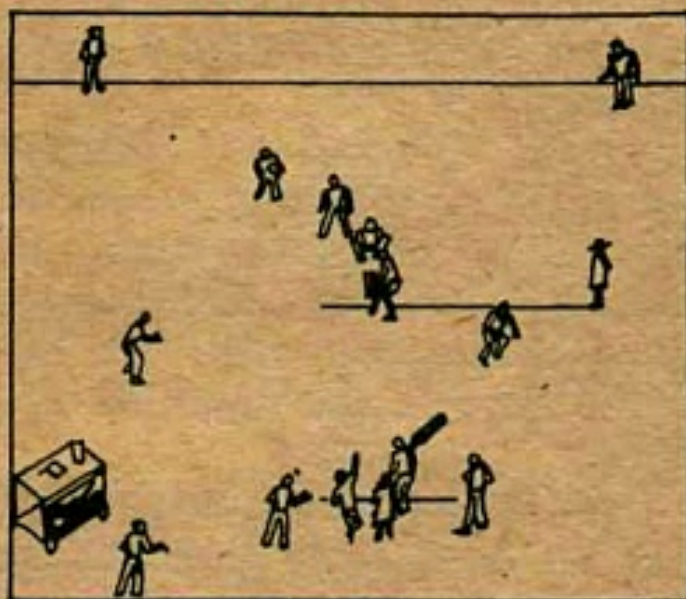
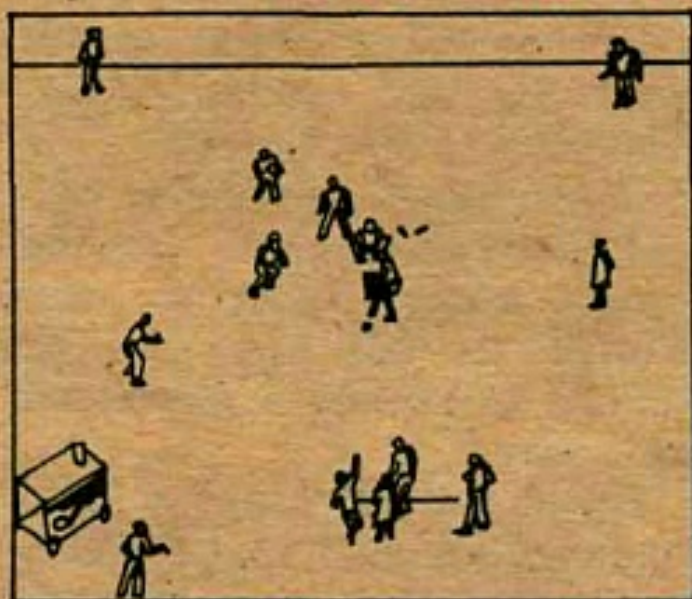
The hermit then left. He was

in fact a well-wisher of the two, donning the disguise of a hermit.

Ajikarta fell silent for a moment and told Jaydev, "If you think that Rohit's anger can influence you, why should you not think that your goodwill too can influence him—just as Ramesh's love conquered Sudhir's hatred?"

Jaydev bowed to his guru and agreed to behave as instructed.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES





KIDNAPPED

It was a foggy morning. The young David was on his way through hills and woods to meet his uncle, Ebenezer. He had lost his father and expected much help from the uncle.

Little did he know what a villain Ebenezer was. The fellow had usurped the estate of David's father. Now he was out to put an end to David's life.

One night he gave David some money saying that he owed the amount to his father. He then asked the boy to climb to the top of the high stair and open a room and bring a chest down.

David followed the instruction. If that did not result in his falling down to death, it was because a flash of lightning showed him that there was no room beyond the door on the top!

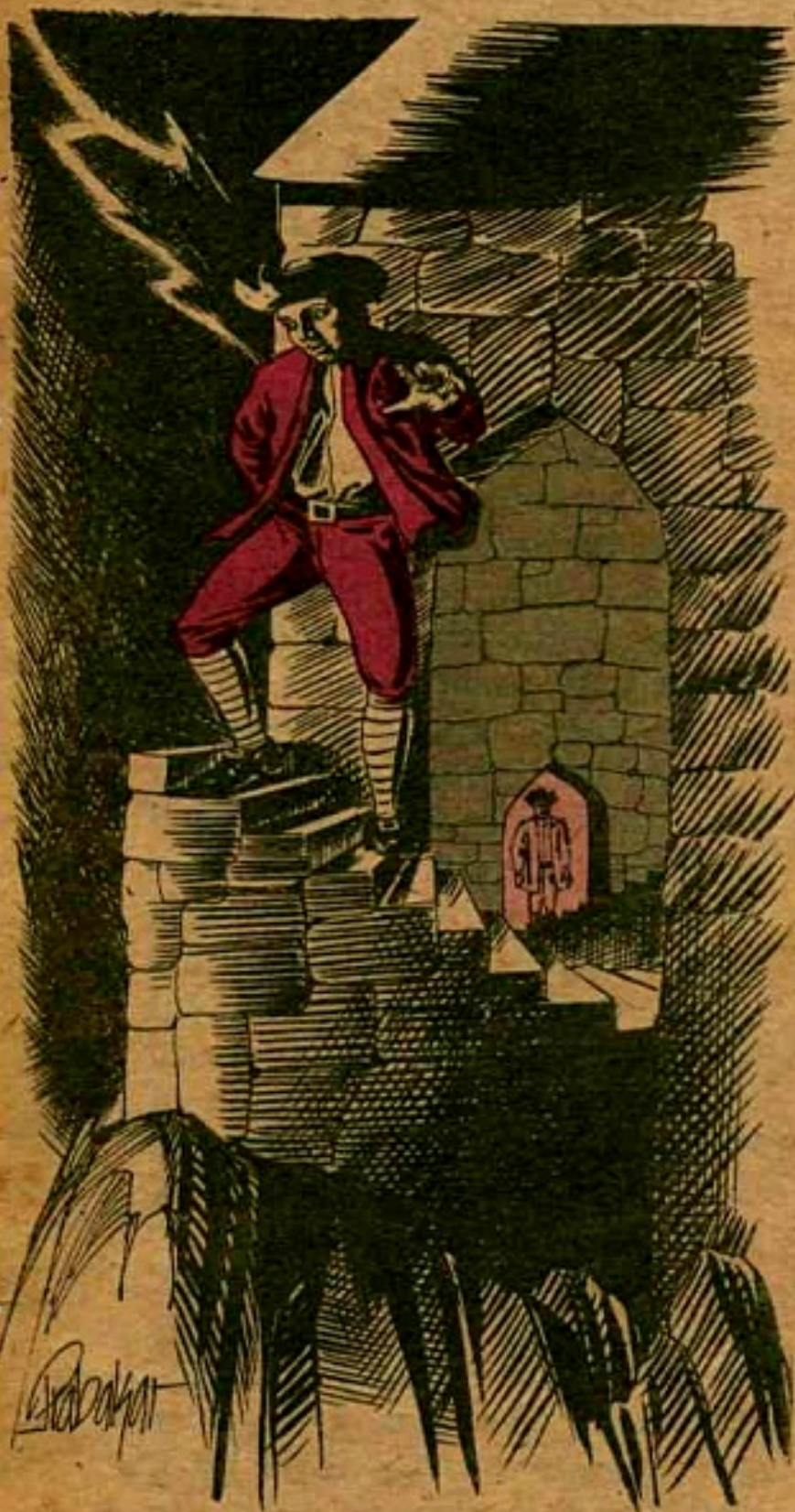
He realised that in the morning his dead body would have been found lying on the ground

below, with the money in the pocket. Ebenezer would have announced that he had been accidentally killed while trying to escape after stealing the money.

David now wished to flee his uncle's house. But before he could do that, Ebenezer, under a false pretext, led him to a ship in the harbour. He was knocked on the head and kidnapped. Ebenezer had handed him over to the ship's captain. He was to be sold as a slave at a distant port.

Under darkness and fog one night the ship ran into a boat. The boat sank, killing all but one. The sole survivor, Alan, climbed aboard the ship. He paid the captain for being carried to his destination. But the wicked captain and his men plotted to kill him, for, he seemed to possess a good deal of money.

David warned Alan in time. The two became friends. Soon there was a fierce fight with



Alan and David on one side and the captain's party on the other. The latter was routed.

But thereafter the ship dashed against a rock, throwing off David. He was separated from Alan. However, after an anxious search on the land, he found his friend again.

It so happened that the two were present when a very important person, Colin Campbell of Glenure, was murdered. Though innocent, the two were suspected to have committed the crime. They would have been hanged had they been caught. But they escaped.

At last they met Rankiellor, a friend of David's late father. The courageous Alan and the intelligent Rankiellor obliged Ebenezer to restore to David his father's estate. David was now happy and settled in life.

Robert Louis Stevenson (the author of *Treasure Island* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, published *Kidnapped*, an absorbing story of adventure, in 1886.



THE MOON KING AND HIS SUBJECTS

Tales from the Panchatantra

Once some creatures of the forest were discussing about the need of having a king. They thought that without a ruler, there was anarchy. But who should be the king?

"If we must have a king, then, we should choose one who is great," said a bird.

"But one who is already great may not care to look after our interest," observed another.

"Even then it pays to pass on as the subjects of the great. Did not the rabbits escape a great calamity by declaring themselves as the subjects of the moon?" replied the bird.

And to satisfy the curiosity of his listeners, he narrated the following incident:

In a certain forest lived a large number of elephants under their king, Chaturdanta. They lived quite happily, for the forest

was evergreen and there were several natural lakes inside it. King Chaturdanta had a group of able-bodied elephants for his officers. They roamed about in the wide forest and kept watch on such beasts from whom they expect danger.

Thus everything went on all right until one year there befell a severe drought. The lakes dried up. King Chaturdanta was worried about providing water to his subjects. He sent his officers in all directions to look for some fresh source of water. Most of them returned sad after a fruitless search. Two, however, came back with their faces looking quite bright.

"My lord, there is another forest ten miles away. Although there are no lakes in that forest, a river flows by it and there is enough water in

the river to meet our need. We can go over to that forest and live there till the next monsoon," reported one of the two.

The other elephant's face beamed even brighter. He said, "At the farthest end of this forest itself there is a lake which I have just discovered. It abounds in fresh and cool water. Half our thirst should be quenched even when we have a mere look at it!"

King Chaturdanta, naturally, was not in favour of migrating to a new forest. He led his subjects, early next morning, to the lake at the end of the forest and rejoiced at its sight. There were thick bushes around it teeming with berries. Tall trees with prolific growth of leaves stood behind them. Lush creepers hanging from the trees touched the water.

The elephants trumpeted loudly and danced with joy around the lake. Then they entered the lake and enjoyed a long bath. Giving out another chorus of trumpet, they left.

Little did the elephants know what a havoc they wrought on the peaceful life of a small settlement of rabbits. Their frolic and thumps of heavy feet killed dozens of rabbits and



wounded many more inside their numerous small holes.

Those who survived the calamity remained stunned for a while after the departure of the elephants. Then they came together and mourned their numerous small holes.

"What I gathered from their talk, they will come here again tomorrow morning," said one of the rabbits.

"That means we are doomed," observed another.

There was a long silence. Then said an old rabbit, "Well, we have lived around this lake for generations. Because it is situated on the edge of the



forest, we were never troubled by the big beasts who like to live in the interiors of the forest. Now scarcity of water has brought the elephants here. I agree that we are doomed should the elephants continue visiting this lake. But shouldn't we try to stop them?"

There was silence again. Nobody knew how, the tiny creatures that they were, they could check the movement of the elephants.

It was for the old rabbit to speak again: "Well, give me your good wishes and let me see if I can do anything.

He did not disclose his plan to anybody and waited till the nightfall. He then marched towards the habitation of the elephants.

A full moon shone over the forest when the old rabbit saw the elephant king, Chaturdanta,

settling down near a rock for relaxation. The rabbit climbed the rock and said, "I greet His Highness King Chaturdanta!"

The elephant-king stood up and located the rabbit. With surprise, he asked him, "Who are you?"

"You should look upon me as an ambassador, for I bring a message from the Moon King," said the rabbit gravely.

"Moon King? What is his message for me, please?" asked Chaturdanta.

"Who in the world does not know that the lake you visited today belongs to Moon King? Even the shape of the lake should remind a passer-by of the crescent moon. It is at the wish of Moon King that we the rabbits, his glorious subjects, live around the lake. Upon his visit to the lake tonight, the Moon King is dis-

tressed to see the harm you have caused to us, his subjects!" said the rabbit.

"Is it so? What do you suggest me to do?" asked the elephant anxiously.

"I don't suggest anything. All I wish to tell you is, the Moon King may decide not to shine over this forest any more. That will bring terrible consequences. You will go down in history as the cause of this misfortune of the forest," warned the rabbit.

"Please lead me to your king. I will apologise to him," said the elephant.

The rabbit led Chaturdanta to the lake which brilliantly reflected the full moon. Chaturdanta, wishing to go closer to the moon, stepped into the water. Instantly a hundred waves reflected a hundred moons. Scared, the ele-

phant stepped back and asked the rabbit, "What is the matter? Is your king annoyed with me?"

"Quite so. You see, he does not relish even your touching the water of his lake, what to speak of your bathing in it," explained the rabbit.

"Then, how do I apologise to him?" asked the elephant.

"I will do all the apologising on your behalf. The best course for you should be to leave the forest and never to approach this lake," told the rabbit.

"Let it be so. There is enough water in a river that flows by a nearby forest. We can migrate over there. Please plead with your king to shine over this forest as usual," King Chaturdanta appealed to the little rabbit and departed hastily. The same night he led his subjects away to the next forest!





TWO DREAMS

King Chitraketu of Suryapur was renowned for the many good works he did for his subjects. He was always praised by the people who lived happily under his able rule.

But Madhav Verma, the ruler of the neighbouring kingdom, Jainagar, hardly bothered for the welfare of his subjects. He was for expanding the territory of his kingdom. He had attacked Suryapur several times, but faced with defeat every time.

The people of Jainagar were reduced to poverty because of their king's vain expeditions to conquer other kingdoms. Soon there was a famine in Jainagar following a drought. The people had hardly any money to

buy food-stuff from other countries. The king's treasury too was empty.

But King Madhav Verma never bothered about the plight of his subjects. He made no effort to borrow food from any other King.

Consequently, a large number of the people fled to Suryapur. King Chitraketu received them with compassion and made arrangements for feeding them.

The refugees were sheltered in camps and were given respectable works to do against the food they received.

King Chitraketu dreamt one night that he was wandering in a heavenly sphere. He saw a beautiful castle with godly be-

ings preparing a throne.

"Who is to sit on this throne?" he asked.

"There is a king named Chitraketu. Large is his heart. He spends generously in philanthropy. One day or the other he shall depart from the earth. This shall be his abode then," replied the godly beings.

Chitraketu's dream ended. He was delighted to know that the gods liked his charity. He ordered his officers to produce a thousand people before him every morning who would receive alms from him.

This went on for a long time. Officers found it quite easy to get hold of people who would receive alms. Many such people lived in camps near the palace so that they could receive gifts from the King almost daily. It was great fun

for them.

One night the king dreamt of a filthy place where some devilish fellows, whips in their hands, seemed to wait for somebody.

"Whom are you expecting here?" asked the king.

"There is a king named Chitraketu who is squandering away wealth in the name of charity. People have stopped working. They spend the money they receive from the king in drinking and gambling. One day Chitraketu has to leave the world. We will then catch hold of him and punish him here," said those terrible-looking beings.

The king woke up. He stopped giving alms. Instead, he used his wealth for the welfare of the people through several purposeful projects.



MANAGING THE KING!

A foolish king, luckily, had a clever minister. Once the kingdom was threatened by a famine. The king, however, had a huge stock of grain.

But when his subjects requested him to release grain from his stock, he refused to do so. The people complained about it to the minister.

"My lord, a time may come when the hungry people would plunder the store," the minister whispered to the king.

"Send all the grain for storage to an island which cannot be reached by the people," instructed the king.

The minister carried the stock of grain to the seaside. Then he informed the king, "My lord, the ship loaded with the grain has sunk!"

"In that case let the people dive into the sea and take whatever grain they can find, free," said the king.

The minister then arranged for a proper distribution of the grain from the seaside.





It was on the fifth day of the bright half of a lunar month that Rama had left Ayodhya. Fourteen years later, on the same day, he reached the Ashram of Sage Bharadwaja, on his return journey to Ayodhya. He bowed to the sage and said, "O great sage, I am eager to know about the conditions prevailing in Ayodhya. Is Bharata ruling the land with justice and efficiency?"

"Do not worry on that account, O Rama, for Bharata has conducted himself saintly. He is so humble that instead of sitting on the throne himself, he placed your sandals on it. He never allowed anybody to look upon him as the king, but he called himself your servant and

viceroys. The people are happy. They are all looking forward to your return," said the sage.

At Bharadwaja's request Rama decided to spend a day in the Ashram. He told Hanuman, "Go to Shringaveripur and meet the king of the hills, Guha. He will be delighted to hear of our victory and return. He will show you the way to Ayodhya. Upon your arrival in the city, meet Bharata and narrate to him all that befell us, our battle with Ravana and our success in rescuing Sita. While doing so, observe Bharata's reactions. It is not unnatural for anyone to grow attached to one's position in the course of years. If Bharata is found to be even slightly sad at



the thought of losing his authority, I must allow him to continue as the ruler. Hence, it is important to know his mind."

Hanuman rose to the sky and descended at Shringaveripur. After duly informing Guha, to the great joy of the latter, all about Rama's adventure and safe return, Hanuman proceeded to Nandigram.

Nandigram, surrounded by gardens and orchards, was the place, not far from Ayodhya, where Bharata awaited Rama. He was beset with anxiety at the delay in Rama's return. He hardly cared for sleep and food. He wore simple ochre clothes. Growth of hair gave him the

appearance of a hermit. His ministers too followed suit and looked like hermits. Bharata ruled the country from his camp at Nandigram.

Hanuman bowed to Bharata and said, "I bring to you good tidings from Sri Ramachandra, O worthy prince! He is on his way to Ayodhya, after a glorious victory over Ravana, the demon-king who had kidnapped Sita. Safe, O Bharata, is Mother Sita. Rama will meet you before long along with Sita, Lakshmana and the lucky heroes who assisted him in the battle. I am here to ascertain that you are in the best of health."

Bharata heard the message with rapt attention. Excess of joy made him lose consciousness for a moment. Upon recovery, he said, "O great and glorious messenger, I do not know whether I should look upon you as a god or as an angel. Also, I am at a loss to understand how I can reward you for the tidings you have brought. I bestow upon you hundreds of villages, a large number of cattle and a huge amount of wealth as gifts."

Hanuman then narrated to Bharata all that had happened

since Rama left Chitrakut where Bharata had met him last. Bharata was struck with amazement at the course of events. He then ordered for the special worship of the deities in the various temples and for festivals to be held all over the kingdom.

He directed his officers to make the road between Nandigram and Ayodhya as beautiful as possible with flower-decked welcome arches and other innovations.

Soon was formed a magnificent procession that went out to receive Rama, led by Bharata.

Bharata held Rama's sandals on his head as he advanced. His ministers followed him. Singers and dancers made the event lively. High officials carried the bejewelled umbrella and the sceptre, the symbols of royal authority, to present them to Rama at the earliest. The queens of Dasaratha too, surrounded by their maids, were in the procession. Besides, there were priests and the prominent citizens of Ayodhya as well as numerous soldiers.

The impatient Bharata once asked Hanuman, "Where is the flying chariot of which you spoke? Why should it be so late?"

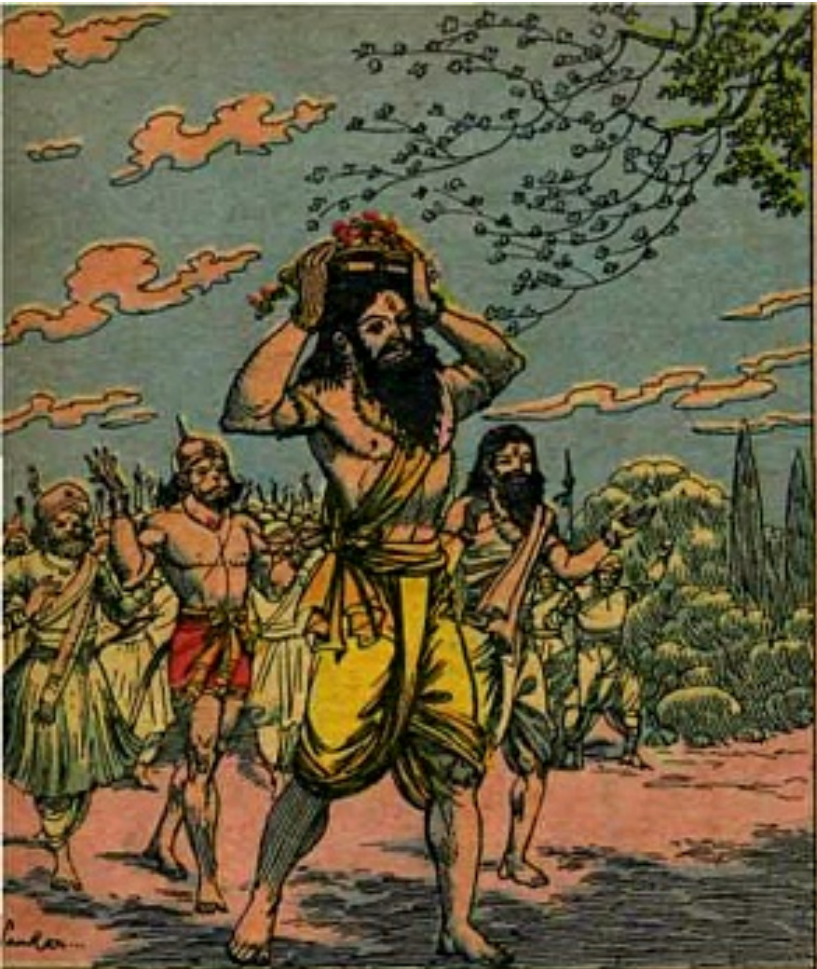


Rama had been charmed by the environment of Bharadwaja's Ashram. The splendour of Nature around it and the love of the sage gave him great happiness. He had left the Ashram in the morning.

"Look at the sky over the horizon, O prince, and see the dazzling gold chariot that is approaching us fast. The chariot was once Kubera's. Now it is at my master's service," said Hanuman.

The people broke into shouts of joy. "Here comes the flying chariot with Rama, Sita and Lakshmana," said thousands of voices.

People who sat on elephants



or horses got down. Soon the flying chariot, Pushpaka, descended before them. As soon as Rama emerged from it Bharata prostrated himself to him and said, "I have carried on your instruction to the best of my ability. I have remained alert all through the past fourteen years to see that your subjects lived happily."

Rama embraced Bharata. Thereafter Bharata entered the chariot and bowed to Sita and greeted Lakshmana. He then extended his warm welcome to the guests. To Sugriva he said, "We were four brothers. You have become our fifth brother. We can never pay back our

debts to you." To Vibhishana he said, "My heart is filled with gratitude for you."

Shatrughna too prostrated himself to Rama and Lakshmana and then offered flowers at the feet of Sita. Rama rushed to his mother, Kaushalya, and fell at her feet. He then showed due reverence to Sumitra, Kaikeyi and Sage Vasishtha.

Bharata placed the sandals at Rama's feet and made him wear them. He then said, his voice choking with emotion, "I have served the land as your servant for fourteen years. You are back in your kingdom today. What loftier sight could I ever see? Fulfilled is the purpose of my life!"

Rama sent the flying chariot, Pushpak, back to its original owner, Kubera.

Preparations were afoot for Rama's coronation while Rama was still at Nandigram. The whole kingdom went jolly. Rama and Sita looked most dignified and beautiful in their royal attires. Shatrughna and the queens of Dasharatha had prepared Rama and Sita respectively for the occasion.

The ministers left for Ayodhya in advance to make

the necessary arrangements for the long-awaited event. Soon Rama, riding a chariot, reached the city. He was followed by Sugriva and Hanuman who marvelled at the magnificence of Ayodhya.

Rama entered his father's palace amidst joyous songs and the sound of music. Apartments adjoining the palace garden were allocated to the guests.

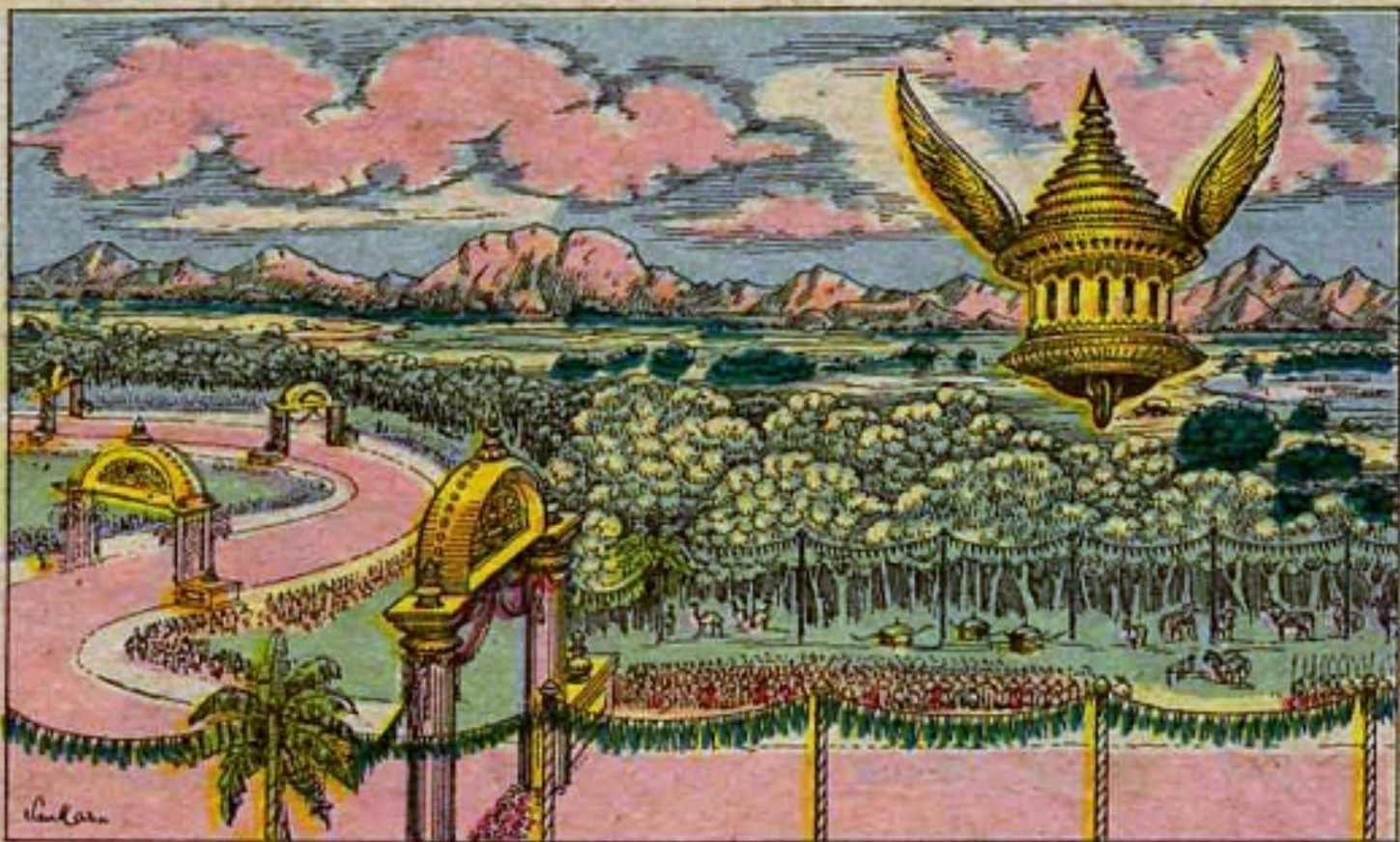
Sugriva gave four gold pitchers to four of the Vanara heroes, namely, Hanuman, Jambavan, Vegadarshi and Rishava, and asked them to fetch waters from the four oceans before the dawn.

The heroes went out immediately. They returned with waters not only from the four oceans, but also from five hundred rivers.

The coronation was performed with all the ceremonies prescribed in the scriptures. Rama and Sita sat on the bejewelled throne. Priests guided the function, with all the ministers, generals and noblemen playing their due roles.

Shatrughna held the white umbrella on Rama and Sita while Sugriva and Vibhishana stood with fans in their hands.

Rama doled out alms and gifts to the needy and the deserv-





ing. In the process, he gave a pearl necklace to Sita and said, "You can give this to one towards whom you feel motherly affection."

Sita immediately called Hanuman and offered the necklace to him. The other Vanaras were rewarded by Rama.

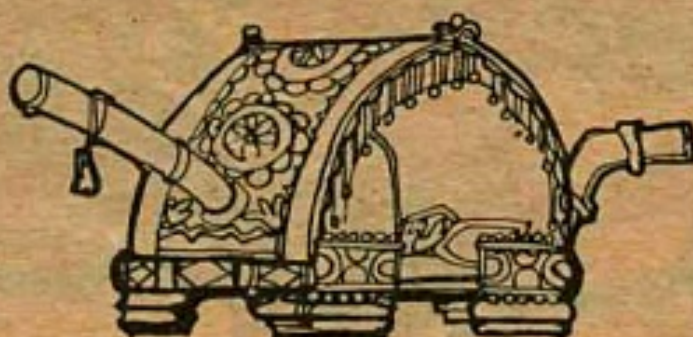
The coronation was over. Vibhishana returned to Lanka. Rama declared Bharata to be the crown-prince and gave his

attention to the people's welfare.

The people of Ayodhya continued in their festivities for a long time. On one hand, they were delighted at Rama's return. On the other hand, they were happy with Bharata's truthful conduct. Indeed, Bharata had ruled Ayodhya in the spirit of utter humility. It was a period of askesis for him. He proved himself a worthy brother of Rama.

Contd.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





The Box with A Message

Razak was a poor young man who served in a merchant's shop in a certain city. He earned just enough to make his both ends meet.

Once a dacoit proved a menace to the city-dwellers. The sultan made an announcement to the effect that if anybody could help capture the dacoit he would bag a heavy reward.

One evening the people saw Razak and his wife quarrelling on a public square. Passers-by gathered around them and many of them enquired what the matter was.

"It is about this box. He was carrying it away to the other

town without my knowledge," complained Razak's wife, pointing to an attractive box.

"Ladies and gentlemen, this box was given to me by the nawab of a distant land. He told me that whoever would hand it over to our sultan would get a thousand rupees. The box contains nothing except a scrap of paper. This foolish woman insists that we should keep the box to ourselves," said Razak.

"Judge, O ladies and gentlemen, isn't my husband a fool? Would he give out the whole story of the box to the public were he not a fool?" screamed his wife.

"The box does not seem to be valuable. Whereas if I give it to sultan, I will receive a thousand rupees. The nawab could have sent it through anybody. He saw me by chance and learnt that I am a subject of the sultan. If I keep it, who knows it won't get stolen one day?" said Razak.

They quarrelled for a long time. As old passers-by left the scene, new passers-by gathered and heard the cause of the quarrel. At last Razak's wife gave up. Razak carried the box away.

As he began walking, he could understand that someone was following him. On his way to the next city where the sultan lived, he stopped to pass his night in an inn.

He pretended to be in a sound sleep, but knew quite

well when someone stole the box away around midnight.

The thief presented the box, early in the morning, to the sultan. Upon opening it, the sultan found a scrap of paper bearing these words: "The fellow who hands over this box to you is most probably the dacoit who has created a panic in our town. Please detain him. I am meeting you soon. Razak."

And Razak appeared before the sultan soon and told all about his false quarrel with his wife to attract the dacoit's attention. Further investigation confirmed that the fellow who stole the box and gave it to the sultan tempted by the promised reward was indeed the notorious dacoit. He was punished while Razak bagged a reward of five thousand rupees.



*New Tales of King Vikram,
and the Vampire*

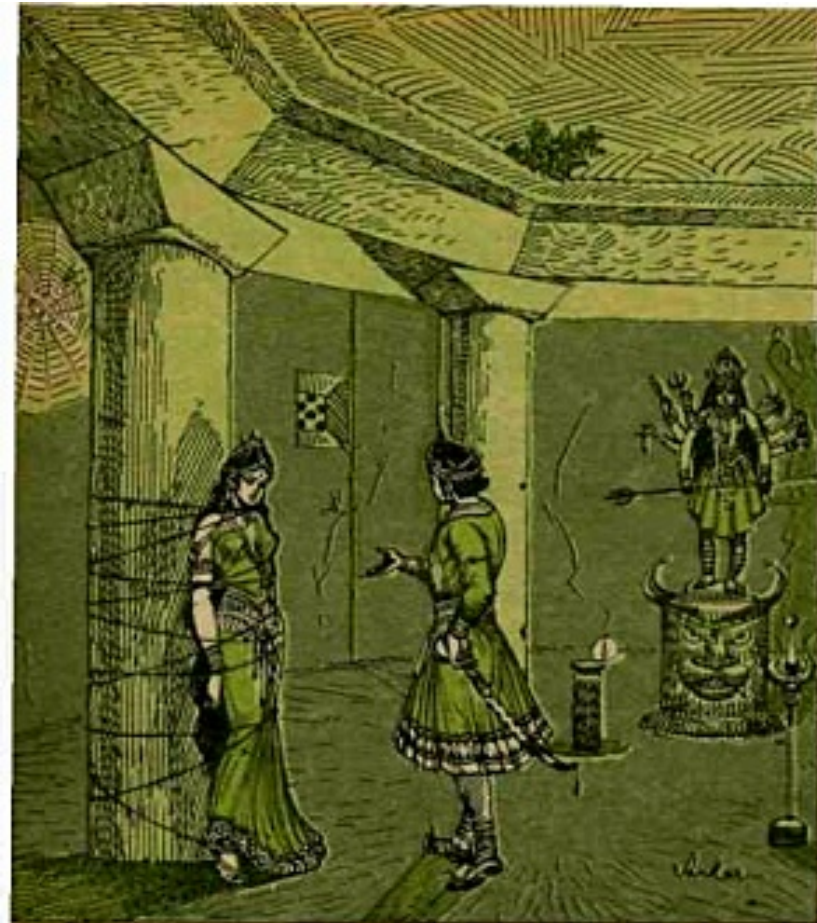
TRAVELS OF A PRINCE

King Vikram climbed the desolate tree once more and brought down the corpse. It was a dark night that seemed darker after every flash of lightning. From far and near could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. At times jackals howled and hyenas screamed.

The king, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, began walking through the cremation ground with firm steps. Suddenly spoke out the vampire that had possessed the corpse: "O King, I wonder if it is not your father who has asked you to perform some unusual task. Indeed, there are fathers who derive joy by sending their sons on difficult missions. Such a father was Gunadeva, the King of Kamarupa. Let me narrate to you the episodes that concerned him and his son."

Continued the vampire: Prince Rajendra, son of King Gunadeva, was an able and clever young man, well-versed in statecraft. All were expecting the king to declare him the





crown-prince. But, instead of doing any such thing, the king asked him to go out on a journey into the lands beyond his own kingdom.

Prince Rajendra rode out. Unknown to himself, he was followed by a few able-bodied soldiers and spies in disguise. They were to come to his rescue if he fell into any danger.

The prince travelled on through unfamiliar villages and towns and entered a forest. While he relaxed under a tree, he heard a faint moaning. He looked for its source in all directions, but saw no human being. Suddenly he saw a pit

hidden by a bush.

He descended into the pit. A stair led into an underground room lighted by a lamp. Inside, he saw a charming young lady bound to a pillar in front of a stone image.

"Who are you?" asked the surprised prince.

"I am Manimala, the princess of Malav. I was kidnapped by a tantrik. His only daughter is dead. I was born on the same day and at the same moment as his daughter. He believes that if he sacrifices me before his deity at an auspicious hour, his daughter will come back to life. Not much time is left for that auspicious hour to come," said the princess.

"Don't you worry, O Princess, I will see to it that the tantrik's plan is foiled," assured the prince. He then hid behind a pillar.

The tantrik arrived there a little before midnight. He sat down before the deity and began chanting some hymns. At an opportune moment the prince rushed out and beheaded him. He then freed the princess and carried her on his horse to Malav.

The royal family of Malav as well as the people greatly

rejoiced the return of their princess. Manimala was married to Rajendra.

The King of Kamarupa warmly received his son who returned to the capital with his bride. Princess Manimala, no doubt, was as virtuous as she was beautiful.

A few days passed. The king told the prince again: "Though happy I am with the travel you had, I am not quite satisfied. Go out on a journey once more, this time in the opposite direction."

Rajendra set forth on his journey the very next day. He was followed by a group of disguised soldiers and spies as on the previous occasion.

He was soon in a kingdom the people of which looked sad and emaciated. Rajendra understood that there was a famine in the land. Instead of providing for any relief to the people, the king was keen on realising his dues from them. Those who failed to pay taxes were severely punished. The people groaned under the tyranny.

Rajendra was sad at the plight of the people. He asked some officers why they did not sympathise with the people. All he



got from the officers was rude rebuff.

He braved into the royal court and accused the king of inhumanity. The king got upset and angry. He ordered Rajendra to be thrown into gaol.

Soldiers of Kamarupa who had followed Rajendra immediately galloped back to their capital and informed King Gunadeva about Rajendra's fate. The army of Kamarupa lost no time in invading the Kingdom. A battle ensued. But King Gunadeva won a victory easily.

Rajendra was set free. King Gunadeva embraced him and said, "I am thoroughly satisfied

with your travel."

Upon their return to Kamarupa Rajendra was declared the crown prince.

The vampire paused for a moment and then asked, "O King, is it not rather strange that King Gunadeva did not feel satisfied with the first round of Rajendra's travel although the prince returned with an excellent bride? How is it that the second round of his travel, which brought him much bitter experience, satisfied his father? O King, answer if you can. But if you keep quiet despite your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your shoulder."

Answered King Vikram, "King Gunadeva, though not satisfied, was quite happy with his son's first round of travel. However, what he wanted was

to acquaint his son with the hard realities of life. The second round of the prince's travel was quite educative. The prince saw how the people suffered in the hands of a bad king and his officers. That should help him to remain alert when he becomes a ruler. King Gunadeva felt satisfied because now his son knew how to feel for the common man. The other cause of his satisfaction was the proof that his son had the courage to stand up against injustice. While Rajendra's first travel had resulted in his personal happiness, his second travel brought him experience that was bound to be beneficial to the whole kingdom."

As soon as King Vikram concluded his answer, the vampire, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.





A Lesson for the Son

Long long ago, when Puri was the capital of Kalinga, there lived in the city a prosperous merchant named Virbhadra. He had lost his wife quite early in life. However, he had a son named Subahu, his only child.

Virbhadra was not only an honest and intelligent trader but also a wise man. All the merchants of the city respected him and considered him their doyen.

Those were the days when the merchants of Kalinga launched voyages to distant lands for commerce. Virbhadra too had to go out once every two years.

During his absence from home, his young son fell into evil company. At first Vir-

bhadra did not know about his son's fall. When he came to know about it, it had been too late. Subahu had taken to gambling and other vices that went with it. His companions exploited him through flattery. He was too naive to understand their trick.

When Virbhadra was absent, the key of his treasury remained with Subahu. Upon his return he would see his cash considerably reduced. From his servants and his neighbours he got an account of his son's conduct in the company of other youths.

Virbhadra was worried. He called his son to his side and asked him to beware of his



company.

"Father, my friends are just wonderful. They will do anything for me," replied Subahu.

Virbhadra tried in various ways to get his son rid of his bad habits, but failed. Subahu would promise that he would stop indulging in gambling and all that, but he would go on doing as of old hiding from his father.

One day Virbhadra told Subahu, "My son, I am going out to the island of Java. This time I am taking a big chance. I am making an investment of all my resources. I am also borrowing a lot of money from

my friends."

"That is all right. But you must leave sufficient money at home for me to spend during your absence," pleaded Subahu.

"I can't. However, whatever money you need will be provided to you by my merchant friends, on loan. You can approach any of them. None would refuse to oblige you," said Virbhadra.

Subahu knew too well that what his father said was true. As soon as Virbhadra left home, he went to the merchant who lived nearest and borrowed five hundred rupees. He spent it in the company of his friends in no time. His friends made his house their camp and Subahu entertained them lavishly.

A week later Subahu approached another merchant and borrowed another five hundred from him. This too was spent before long.

He was thinking from whom to borrow next when two mariners came running to him and told him that his father's ship had been wrecked and all but the two of them had been drowned.

"What about my father?" cried out Subahu.

The mariners kept quiet and

wiped their eyes.

"What about all the merchandise into which had gone all our money?" he asked again.

"All is gone," replied the mariners with heavy sighs.

Subahu broke down. Soon his friends came. But when they heard of his misfortune, after uttering a few words in the way of consoling him, they slipped away.

"What about the loans we gave you? Now that Virbhadra is not likely to return, you must arrange to pay back our money," said the two merchants.

"If I had money to pay you, why should I borrow from you?" muttered Subahu.

"The two diamond rings you are wearing ought to fetch us five hundred rupees each," said the merchants and they obliged Subahu to surrender the rings to them.

Soon a host of merchants met Subahu. After some hastily uttered words of sympathy they brought out documents which showed that Virbhadra had borrowed from them heavily. They demanded parts of Virbhadra's landed property against the loans. There was no other way open to Subahu than to agree to their demands.



His style of living changed overnight as his servants left him when they realised that he was unable to maintain them. Subahu had to pledge his household utensils to money-lenders and receive small sums for buying his own food.

A merchant from the neighbourhood proposed to appoint him as his clerk. Subahu could have his food in his employer's house and receive a small salary too.

Subahu agreed to the proposal. The merchant made him work hard, but Subahu learnt the principles of business well. He was now poor and humble.

At night he lamented his conduct towards his father and shed tears.

A year passed. The day on which Virbhadra had left home a year ago returned. In the morning Subahu was surprised to see the leading merchants of the city gathering in his house. Their servants were busy cleaning and decorating his house. He could not understand the reason behind such activities.

"It is to commemorate your father's voyage, sonny!" said an old merchant.

"What is there to commemorate it? My father went out on an inauspicious day, never to be back!" cried out Subahu.

"But I am back!" said an old familiar voice.

Subahu looked back. Was he dreaming? He wiped his eyes and looked again. It was in-

deed Virbhadra!

"Thank God, you are alive, father!" Subahu uttered with difficulty, trembling with excitement.

"Thank God, you are a changed man, my son!" said his father as he embraced Subahu.

Tears rolling down his cheeks, Subahu said, "Pardon me my waywardness father, I will never be the same again. I am so happy that you are alive. I don't care if the ship and the wealth are gone!"

"Nothing is gone, my son, myself and my friends just enacted a bit of drama for your good. That is all," confessed Virbhadra.

Subahu was overwhelmed. He realised that the past one year had been the most valuable time in his life.





A Matter of Choice

"Precious is human life. One should not let it pass without its proper use," said a teacher, in days gone by, to his students. He added, "Since death is certain, one should choose to die for some good cause, if there is any choice before him."

"Sir, I do not follow you. Do such occasions arise when one can choose between the ordinary way of dying and dying for a cause?" asked a disciple.

"To live a pure life and to die when destiny so ordains is the normal way. There is nothing wrong in it. But there are times when one is called upon to risk his life for a noble cause. If one shirks the risk, may be, he will die in a worse situation," said the teacher.

"Sir, can you explain the point with an example?" asked a student.

Said the teacher: The land of Anga was ruled by Sunandadev who was an honest king. But he gave more attention to the welfare of the people than to the defence of his territory.

Suddenly his kingdom was invaded by a powerful king. Sunandadev's army, of course, put forth valiant resistance, but it was necessary to take as many steps as possible to check the enemy.

Officers went out into the kingdom and recruited a number of young men to the army. The common people responded quite enthusiastically to the urgent need of the

land. Still the enemy proved quite powerful. They infiltrated into Anga and advanced towards the capital. Between the capital and the frontier there was a thick forest.

"We have in our country two master archers. We should post them in the forest. When the enemy advances through the forest, the archers can harass them," proposed the minister.

The two archers were accordingly approached by an officer. But their vanity puffed up. "The king is helpless without us," one told the other and they demanded that they be made courtiers if they are to help the king.

"It is not within my right to bargain with you. Our land is in danger. Is it not the duty of every citizen to help protect it?" asked the officer.

"No, we are not prepared to risk our lives without the proper price," said the archers.

Thinking that the king might force them to join the army, they escaped into the forest. While wandering, they saw a deer. Both took aim at it and shot their arrows. The deer fell.

"I killed it," said the first archer.

"No, I killed it," insisted the other.

Their quarrel grew bitter. Both brought out their daggers and stabbed each other at the same time.

Thus were two lives sacrificed at the altar of vanity and wrath instead of in the service of the motherland. When the enemy retreated, the people of Anga rejoiced not only at the enemy's defeat, but also at the death of those two selfish archers!



MONUMENTS OF INDIA

GOMATESWARA

On the Indragiri hill at Sravana Belgola in Karnataka stands an image carved out of a single block of black granite, which for its excellence, is unrivalled in the world as a sculpture of its kind.

The image, famous as Gomateswara, was built in A.D. 983, under the auspices of Chamunda Ray, the minister of the Ganga King, Rajamalla Satyavakya.

This 56-foot-high statue is bathed in milk, curd, honey, rice etc. during the Mahamastakaviseka festival of the Jains.

Indragiri has 43 other images too.



ONLY IF THE DONKEY COULD ROAR!

Have you heard the tale about the donkey and the camel? They had escaped from their master. In the joy of freedom, the donkey who was quite confident of his own musical talent, wanted to teach the camel how to sing. The camel pleaded with him to keep quiet. But he would not. His repeated bray attracted a party of merchants. Both were caught and enslaved again—thanks to the donkey's bray!

Only if the donkey could roar! The merchants would have taken to their heels!

But sometimes, in their compositions, children make a donkey bark or a pig neigh. And that is the time for the teacher to roar! Better we be sure who should bark and who should neigh.

Ape	gibbers	Dog	barks
Ass	brays	Elephant	trumpets
(or Donkey)		Horse	neighs
Bear	growls	Lamb	bleats
Bull	bellows	Lion	roars
Cat	purrs and mews	Monkey	chatters
Cow	lows	Mouse	squeaks
		Pig	grunts





I will like to know the significance of Good Friday.

Miss Yasmeen Samiullah, Hyderabad.

The Friday that comes before the Easter is called Good Friday. This year it falls on the 24th of the current month, March, coinciding with the Holi festival.

The Easter Sunday falls between March 22 and April 25. This is the most joyous of all Christian festivals, for, this commemorates the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Friday preceding the Easter is the anniversary of Crucifixion—the day Jesus was put to death by being nailed to a cross. The term, Good Friday, probably is a corruption of "God's Friday"



Are the tales of King Vikram and the Vampire true?

Can legends be called history?

Rabindara Kumar Behura, Uttarola, Cuttack.

The tales of king Vikram and the Vampire are fiction, though like most of the ancient stories of India, they contain some truth or some experience that matters in life. For an account of the original tales of Vikram and the Vampire, see this column in February '78 issue of your magazine.

Many legends owe their origin to history, but are often mixed up with imagination. They are not strictly facts, but, as a writer put it, they "are the spiritual side of facts". In other words, while history gives us a factual account of the events, legends tell us about the spirit behind such events. But not all legends. Purely imaginary stories also pass as legends.

(Readers are requested not to send new questions for a few months. Let your magazine finish answering at least a part of the backload of questions.)

CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

(You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a post card and mail it to 'Story Title Contest', Chandamama, 2 & 3, Arcot Road, Madras 600 026, to reach us by the 20th of March. A reward of Rs. 25.00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the May '78 issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the Photo-Caption Contest.)



Once upon a time there was a king. He was a man of extreme ill-temper.

One day the king got terribly annoyed with his court-poet; so much so that he told one of his guards, "I will love to see the head of the poet within an hour."

The poet was at home. The guard called him out and led him straight to the execution ground.

"The king will love to see your head," informed the guard as he began unsheathing his sword.

The poet now realised the gravity of the situation. To stand there would be to lose his head. He at once started running.

The guard pursued him. But he was surprised to see the poet heading towards the king's durbar.

"Did I not tell my guard that I will love to see your head?" blurted out the king when he saw the poet.

"My lord, I did not think it proper to send a valuable thing which you would love to see, through an ordinary guard. That would have amounted to showing disrespect to you. So I came here bearing my own head for you to see!"

The king's anger changed into mirth. He rewarded the poet with gold-studded turban for his head!

Result of Story Title Contest held in January Issue

The Prize is awarded to:

Mr. Rajendra S. Kesarwani,

'Kesarwani', 105, New Ramdaspath,
Nagpur 440 010.

Winning Entry—'MILLION RUPEE MYTH'